

Saturday, November 7, 2009
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(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3) joined a majority of his colleagues tonight in voting for the Affordable Health Care for America Act, sweeping health insurance reform legislation to lower the costs of health care for all Americans without adding to the deficit.

"After years of effort, months of debate and listening to the ideas and concerns of people throughout Missouri, momentum is on the side of the American people and health insurance reform," said Congressman Carnahan. **"Today we are one step closer to enacting health insurance reform that controls costs, provides choice and competition, and emphasizes wellness, prevention and shared responsibility."**

With health care costs spiraling out of control each day more Americans and businesses are unable to afford health insurance. After hearing from constituents earlier this year Congressman Carnahan worked to improve the legislation so that it:

- Cares for those with pre-existing conditions right away
- Fully addresses doctor and nurse shortages
- Gives community health centers the resources they need
- Exempts small businesses with payrolls under \$500,000
- Protects seniors and improves Medicare

"If health care reform were easy we would have accomplished a more sensible system when President Truman was in the White House," said Carnahan. **"For our country to dig ourselves out of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression bold and decisive action is needed"**

Legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives levels the playing field and stops insurance companies from discriminating against those with pre-existing conditions like diabetes, a heart condition, or cancer.

"The truth is that the legislation I supported builds upon what works and fixes what's broken," said Congressman Carnahan. **"It puts patients and their doctors back in charge."**

It ensures that people happy with their coverage can keep it. And it gives those without insurance the power to choose the plan that is right for them, just as federal employees like me do."

Carnahan, an original co-sponsor of Pay-As-You-Go legislation that requires additional programs are fully paid for without adding to the deficit, noted that the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has concluded that the health care reform legislation does not add one dime to the deficit.

The bill has been endorsed by more than 300 health care, consumer, and other groups - including the AARP, the American Medical Association, and the Consumers Union.

"It's difficult to see how we fully put America on a path of prosperity without taking action to rein in the rising cost of health care," said Carnahan. "Now that the House of Representatives has taken this monumental step, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to act quickly. Now is the time to put quality, affordable health care within reach for every single American."

Impact of Affordable Health Care for America Act on Missouri:

- Improve employer-based coverage for 3,657,000 Missouri residents.
- Provide credits to help pay for coverage for up to 1,549,000 Missouri households.
- Improve Medicare for 969,000 Missouri beneficiaries, including closing the prescription drug donut hole for 96,400 seniors.
- Allow 150,700 Missouri small businesses to obtain affordable health care coverage and provide tax credits to help reduce health insurance costs for up to 135,900 small businesses.
- Provide coverage for 453,000 uninsured Missourians.
- Protect up to 11,900 Missouri families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs.
- Reduce the cost of uncompensated care for hospitals and health care providers by \$1,545,000.

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